

Despite the known threats against this Nation, the House Democratic leadership has said there's no urgency on updating our Nation's intelligence laws. The FISA law dates back to the Carter administration, and that was almost 30 years ago, and they argue we should not update the law now?

It's no coincidence that the United States has been free from attack at home since September 11, 2001. Violent extremist terrorists are a threat, and that threat must be stopped. Congress must give our intelligence officers the tools and techniques they need to meet the long-term challenges.

Two weeks have passed since our national security community lost the ability to track intelligence without going through slow and burdensome bureaucratic hurdles. That's more than 2 weeks of terrorist communications that will never be recovered.

I am committed to providing responsible and appropriate tools to our intelligence community to protect and defend Americans at home and abroad. I urge my colleagues to do the same and pass the bipartisan FISA bill today.

THE PEACE CORPS

(Mr. FARR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to commemorate the creation of the Peace Corps. Forty-seven years ago this month, March 1961, President Kennedy called upon Americans to serve abroad. Since that time, nearly 200,000 Americans have responded to that call, including five sitting Members of Congress. They left behind the comforts of family and friends and decided to forego high-paying jobs to share their abilities with people across the globe.

Peace Corps volunteers work in the poorest communities of the world's poorest countries, where they build lasting relationships, inspire young people to become leaders, and simply make good friends. Peace Corps volunteers improve America's standing worldwide, one community at a time.

Today I have introduced a bill to reauthorize the Peace Corps and to double its size by the year 2012. I look forward to bipartisan support for the Peace Corps and ask all Members to join the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Members of Congress who cosponsored the Peace Corps reauthorization.

FINANCIAL CRISIS FACING OUR NATION WILL REQUIRE BIPARTISAN EFFORT

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I testified last week before the Budget Committee about the enormous fiscal challenge we face as a Nation and offered a bipar-

tisan solution to respond to outgoing U.S. Comptroller David Walker's characterization of a "tsunami of spending and debt levels that could swamp" our Nation. We must come together across the aisle, and if we don't get our financial house in order and make the sacrifices necessary today, we will hurt our children and our grandchildren.

JIM COOPER and I have joined efforts, a Democrat and a Republican, calling for a national bipartisan commission that will put everything on the table, entitlement spending, other Federal program spending, and tax policy, and come up with recommendations to put our country on a sustainable path. Nothing would be off limits for discussion and recommendations by the commission members. Congress would be required to vote up or down on the plan. If other viable bipartisan solutions are presented, we should look at those too.

I urge Members, I beg Members on both sides of the aisle to come together to take this issue to heart. Let's work together to take the necessary actions to save this country.

IMPORTANCE OF STEM CELL RESEARCH

(Mr. PERLMUTTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I believe there is promise in all forms of stem cell research but especially in embryonic stem cells. Currently, this administration's prohibition of Federal funding for embryonic stem cell procurement is ridiculous.

I campaigned on this issue because people suffering from diabetes, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and epilepsy deserve a government that fights for them. Researchers who care about finding cures to these debilitating diseases need every resource available. That is why I promise to fight until funding flows from Washington to the lab benches in scientific institutions across the country.

Federal funding is essential for embryonic stem cell research and for progress in curing these tough diseases. Mr. Speaker, it is time that we got on track and we stop fighting science in this country.

FISA

(Mr. KAGEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KAGEN. Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, the American public needs to know about misrepresentation. This morning we have heard a misrepresentation of reality about the FISA bill.

We passed a FISA bill that guarantees that we protect not only our Nation but our constitutional rights. Every single Member of Congress has sworn to uphold our United States Constitution, and that means we have judi-

cial oversight, oversight of our administration and the executive branch that may reach far too deep into our personal lives. No administration has the constitutional right to listen in on U.S. citizens. And at no time has FISA gone dark. Our intelligence community has at all times been listening in on conversations of those who seek to destroy our freedom and our rights.

Fellow Americans, understand this: The FISA conversation you're hearing here on the floor is all about a smoke-screen. We have been protecting America each and every minute of the day.

DEMOCRATS WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ TO BRING TROOPS HOME

(Ms. SHEA-PORTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SHEA-PORTER. Mr. Speaker, as we prepare to mark the unfortunate 6-year anniversary of the war in Iraq, a war that is being financed by deficit spending, it's important to recognize the serious effects this war is having on our military. Our generals are warning that our military has been stretched and strained too far.

Perhaps that's why in a recent poll of 3,400 present and former military officers, 88 percent of them said that the demands of the war in Iraq have "stretched the U.S. military dangerously thin." This is the worst readiness crisis since the Vietnam War, and military officers are justifiably worried about military preparedness. Military personnel are so concerned that nearly three-quarters of the officers surveyed in that recent poll said that their civilian leaders are setting "unreasonable goals for the military" in Iraq. And due to multiple deployments, the Army is facing a shortage of officers and enlisted personnel.

Mr. Speaker, the 110th Congress is listening to the military. We will continue to push for a new direction, a new change, and an end to the war in Iraq.

□ 1030

PRESIDENT SEVERELY OUT OF TOUCH WITH CONCERNS OF RISING OIL PRICES

(Mr. CARDOZA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARDOZA. Mr. Speaker, it is clear that President Bush is out of touch with today's consumer. First, he refused to accept that the economy was heading in a downturn. Now, it takes a reporter's question for him to realize that gas prices in this country will soon reach \$4 a gallon at the pump. Despite being reported in newspapers around the Nation, President Bush has told reporters last week that he didn't realize that \$4 gas was possible. The President's energy record leaves a

great deal to be desired. Since he took office, gas prices have doubled, and home heating costs have tripled.

While President Bush remains out of touch, House Democrats acted last week to ease some of that burden. We passed legislation that repeals unnecessary tax subsidies to big oil companies, which reported record profits last year and last month. Instead, the subsidies will go towards tax incentives for clean, renewable energy.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush should recognize that his energy policy has failed the American people, and that he should join us in supporting legislation that will reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

GORHAM PAPER MILL

(Mr. HODES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, the people of Gorham, New Hampshire are hurting. Over 160 workers will lose their jobs at the Fraser Paper Mill next month. Decades ago, the paper industry was thriving throughout Coos and Grafton Counties in New Hampshire. But with new trade policies that ship our jobs overseas, these jobs are disappearing faster, and towns across northern New Hampshire are hurting.

In February, Fraser Paper announced that it will lay off 167 jobs from their facility in Gorham. The news broke just months after the Wausau Paper Mill closed its doors in Groveton and left 303 workers without jobs, and nearly 2 years after Fraser Paper shut down its Berlin site, which resulted in the loss of 250 jobs in the region. I will visit Coos County this Friday to meet with workers in Gorham, Groveton, and Berlin to hear their stories.

I am working to take action to stand up for these working families and their communities. We have already helped with the bipartisan economic stimulus plan that puts more money in the hands of working families, and boosts our economy, but the people of Gorham and the surrounding communities and workers in America need additional help.

I plan on submitting legislation to keep mills and business and jobs like these in New Hampshire. I urge my colleagues to stand with me and stand with our working men and women.

STEM CELL DEBATE

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, in recent months, researchers have created apparent embryonic stem cells from reprogrammed adult skin cells. This is an exciting new breakthrough, known as induced pluripotent stem cells, or iPS, which is an important and incredible milestone. However, it should not halt our efforts towards embryonic stem research. The iPS method is still in its

earliest stages, and there is widespread debate among the scientific community as to the safety and effectiveness of its practical application.

Embryonic stem cell research remains the gold standard for potential therapeutic use. Further, it has laid the foundation of scientific knowledge that has made these recent discoveries possible. We should not abandon one area of research just because we have made progress in another. We must continue our investment, both public and private, into all areas of responsible stem cell research, whether that is adult stem cell research, embryonic stem cell research, or this new, exciting iPS method. It is the right thing to do. It offers great potential to offering cures for millions of people suffering from some of life's most challenging chronic conditions and diseases. The hope of millions of Americans depends on it.

ON FISA, PRESIDENT AND REPUBLICANS PLAY POLITICS WITH NATIONAL SECURITY

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, neither the public nor the press are buying into the scare tactics coming out of the White House and the Republican leadership here on Capitol Hill about the expiration of the President's supposed Protect America Act. Here are just a few of the editorial examples in papers from around the Nation.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote that, "The President's assertion that our country is in more danger of an attack is patently ridiculous." The Miami Herald writes that, "Once again, the administration has claimed that if it doesn't get its way, the terrorists win. Unfortunately, the administration is resorting to exaggeration and hyperbole to make its case." The Syracuse Post Standard concluded that "Congress should take the time to get this legislation right."

Mr. Speaker, Congressional Democrats are serious about passing a strong FISA law that gives our intelligence community the legal tools necessary to protect our national security, and that is why bicameral negotiations continue. But, unfortunately, Republicans refuse a seat at that table.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CLAY). Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

RECONSTRUCTION AND STABILIZATION CIVILIAN MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2008

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1084) to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956, and the Foreign Service Act of 1980 to build operational readiness in civilian agencies, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1084

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Reconstruction and Stabilization Civilian Management Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) In June 2004, the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (referred to as the "Coordinator") was established in the Department of State with the mandate to lead, coordinate, and institutionalize United States Government civilian capacity to prevent or prepare for post-conflict situations and help reconstruct and stabilize a country or region that is at risk of, in, or is in transition from, conflict or civil strife.

(2) In December 2005, the Coordinator's mandate was reaffirmed by the National Security Presidential Directive 44, which instructed the Secretary of State, and at the Secretary's direction, the Coordinator, to coordinate and lead integrated United States Government efforts, involving all United States departments and agencies with relevant capabilities, to prepare, plan for, and conduct reconstruction and stabilization operations.

(3) National Security Presidential Directive 44 assigns to the Secretary, with the Coordinator's assistance, the lead role to develop reconstruction and stabilization strategies, ensure civilian interagency program and policy coordination, coordinate interagency processes to identify countries at risk of instability, provide decision-makers with detailed options for an integrated United States Government response in connection with reconstruction and stabilization operations, and carry out a wide range of other actions, including the development of a civilian surge capacity to meet reconstruction and stabilization emergencies. The Secretary and the Coordinator are also charged with coordinating with the Department of Defense on reconstruction and stabilization responses, and integrating planning and implementing procedures.

(4) The Department of Defense issued Directive 3000.05, which establishes that stability operations are a core United States military mission that the Department of Defense must be prepared to conduct and support, provides guidance on stability operations that will evolve over time, and assigns responsibilities within the Department of Defense for planning, training, and preparing to conduct and support stability operations.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.